



18<sup>th</sup> March 2021

Dear Parents and Carers

**Re: NHS Test, Trace, Protect: COVID-19 Rapid Lateral Flow Self-Test**

The Welsh Government has recently announced that a free and voluntary programme of asymptomatic COVID-19 testing will be available in education and childcare settings across Wales. This offer is available to all staff and students in years 10-13 and all college learners.

Along with the primary infection control measures we have implemented, such as social distancing and good hand hygiene, testing will allow us to provide some additional reassurance to the wider school community.

Up to one in three people who have COVID-19 have the virus without symptoms so could be transmitting the virus unknowingly. Part of controlling the spread of the virus requires identifying those infectious individuals who aren't showing symptoms and asking them to self-isolate. Lateral Flow Device (LFD) tests have been widely and successfully used to detect COVID-19 in asymptomatic individuals. The speed and convenience of LFD tests supports detection of the virus in asymptomatic individuals who would not otherwise be tested. They are clinically approved and are crucial in the fight against the virus.

As the tests are more sensitive with higher viral loads, there is a risk of returning a negative result when viral loads are low (e.g. in the early stages of infection). This is why it is recommended that two LFD tests are taken 3 to 4 days apart, to enhance detection by picking up any cases which were not detected during the first test and to catch any new infections. If you consent, we would suggest testing on a Sunday evening and a Wednesday evening.

If you test positive using a LFD, it is likely that you are infectious and you must self-isolate immediately and book and take a polymerase chain reaction (PCR) test within 24 hours of your positive LFD test result. Contact tracing will be triggered following a positive LFD and your close contacts will be required to self-isolate until you receive your PCR test result, if the PCR test result is positive you and your close contacts will have to self-isolate.

A negative LFD result should not be read as a means to relax or ignore social distancing or other virus prevention measures intended to reduce transmission – LFD is an additional tool that contributes to reducing risk.

**How the tests work**

If you agree to take part, a consent form will need to be completed and returned, then the school will arrange for your child to collect a pack of LFD test kits which will enable self-testing from home. Tests should be taken 3 to 4 days apart and ideally the tests should be taken as close to coming into school as possible. The LFDs supplied do not require laboratory processing and can provide a quick result in around 30 minutes. Comprehensive guidance on self-testing is contained in the 'Instructions for Use' leaflet which comes with the test kit and the attached self-test instructions.



Once the test has been conducted each test result must be logged online at [www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result](http://www.gov.uk/report-covid19-result).

### **Purpose of testing**

It is important to highlight that the purpose of the testing policy in education and childcare in Wales is to complement the primary control measures (such as social distancing and face coverings) that have already been put in place to enable face to face learning to continue and to:

- Rapidly identify those who are regularly on site during learning hours, who are unknowingly carrying the virus and ask them to self-isolate.
- Complement symptomatic results data with asymptomatic results data to provide a picture of infection rates as markers for the effectiveness, and implementation of, primary control measures and to assist in the early identification of clusters. In addition to a range of other data and public health advice this information can be used to inform national policy decisions.

The testing policy for education and childcare should not be viewed as a 'test to enable' or 'test to return' to face to face learning i.e. it is not a condition of coming on to the site or accessing learning. Additionally, this testing offer is entirely voluntary.

### **Privacy**

All individuals wishing to take part should familiarise themselves with the testing process and the attached privacy notice, if you choose to participate, you are committing to self-administer the test and provide results for all tests (negative or positive).

With our primary protective measures and testing, we will help to reduce the spread of the virus. I am therefore strongly encouraging all staff and learners to take the tests. However, anyone who chooses not to participate should still attend school if they are not displaying symptoms.

Students who decline to participate in this testing programme should follow the usual national guidelines on self-isolation and anyone should get tested if they show symptoms.

### **Consent**

Taking part in testing is voluntary. There is no expectation or obligation to participate. Nobody should be required to undergo testing without consent, and nobody should be excluded from school if they do not wish to test.

If you want to participate in the lateral flow testing a consent form will have to be completed:

- For **students younger than 16 years**, the consent form must be completed by the parent or legal guardian. Remember to complete **one consent form for each child** you wish to enrol.



- **Students over 16 who are able to provide informed consent**, this form can be completed by themselves, having discussed participation with their parent or legal guardian.
- **For any student who does not have the capacity to provide informed consent**, this form must be completed by the parent or legal guardian.

#### **Consent form**

If you would like to participate or you would like your child to participate in lateral flow testing, please click [HERE](#) and complete the consent form by Monday 22<sup>nd</sup> March 2021.

Thank you for considering the information in this letter. If you have any questions about the programme do not hesitate to contact me.

Yours sincerely

Mrs Jarrett

Headteacher